



Early Achievers Participant Operating Guidelines—Update

September 1, 2013

The following changes in Early Achievers policy apply to current and future Early Achievers participants and are effective **September 1, 2013**.

Rational For policy change:

- Current legislation, [House Bill 1723](#) resulted in changes to Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) subsidy program. **WAC 170-290-0210** states that beginning September 1, 2013, providers receiving payment under the WCCC program will receive a 2% increase in the subsidy rate, calculated on the base rate, for enrolling in Level 2 in the Early Achievers program. Providers must complete Level 2, advance to Level 3 within thirty months, and maintain a Level 3 rating in order to maintain this increase.

Early Achievers has adjusted policy and clarified existing program requirements to help providers meet the eligibility criteria outlined in WAC 170-290-0210. The sections of the [Early Achievers Participant Operating Guidelines](#) affected by these changes are referenced below.

Length of Time to Complete Level 2 Application

- ***The length of time that a facility has to complete the Early Achievers Application for Level 2 has been changed from 12 months to 30 months. (policy change)***
 - Early Achievers participants have 30 months from the date of Early Achievers Registration to complete Level 2. Completion of Level 2 is defined as DEL approval of Early Achievers Application for Level 2.
 - The option for a 6 month extension of Level 2 after 12 months has been removed.
 - Facilities that do not request an evaluation within twelve months of achievement of Level 2 will no longer default to a rated Level 2.

Sections of the Operating Guidelines affected by this change:

Section V1: Moving through Level 2: entrance to completion

— Subsection e: Time limits for Facility Completion of Level 2 (pg. 26)

- Length of time allowed to complete Level 2 requirements
 - Facilities have ~~one-year~~ **thirty months** from the time of DEL confirmation of Early Achievers Registration to complete all Level 2 requirements.
- Request for extension--**section removed**
- Failure to complete requirements within time frame

- A facility's Level 2 participation will expire when:
 - Facility does not complete Level 2 requirements within **thirty months** ~~one year and does not request extension~~
 - ~~Facility is granted a 6 month extension and does not complete Level 2 requirements within extended time~~
- **Subsection i: Facilities that remain a Level 2** (pg. 28)
 - i. Scenarios
 - Upon completion of Level 2 requirements, facilities may remain a Level 2 in the following scenarios:
 - Facility chooses to remain a Level 2 (no evaluation)
 - ~~Facility does not request an evaluation within one year of achievement of Level 2 status and is automatically assigned a Level 2 rating by DEL~~
 - Facility participates in on-site evaluation and is awarded a Level 2 rating because facility does not meet minimum thresholds for Levels 3 through 5

Section VII: Evaluation and Rating

- **Subsection b: Request for Evaluation** (pg. 29)
 - ii. Facilities that do not request an evaluation—**section removed**

Facility timeline to be rated by 30 months from Early Achievers Registration

- ***Facilities that want to be rated in within the 30 months required to maintain the 2% subsidy increase must allow adequate time to participate in all required steps to achieve a rating.*** ([policy clarification](#))

There are multiple sequential steps required in order to assign an Early Achievers rating, including:

- Completion of Level 2 requirements and DEL approval of Early Achievers Application for Level 2
- Participation in rating readiness activities and completion of the Rating Readiness Tool
- Regional Coordinator approval of facility Request for On-Site Evaluation
- Participation in on-site evaluation and data collection visits
- Creation of a rating based on multiple sources of evaluation data.

Therefore, facilities that wish to be rated within 30 months from Early Achievers Registration must plan their participation to allow ample time to complete these steps. Facilities must have an approved Request for On-Site Evaluation in MERIT a *minimum* of 6 months before the date of desired rating. Beginning in July 2014, participants will use the Applicant Cohort schedule outlined in the Operating Guidelines (Section 7; part e) to plan their timeline. Though eligible facilities can request a rating at any time, DEL cannot guarantee that the facility will receive their rating at a faster rate than outlined in the Applicant Cohort schedule.

Sections of the Operating Guidelines affected by this change:

Section V11: Evaluation and Rating

- **Addition of new subsection: *Timeline to request rating*** (above language is inserted into this section)